

# LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS

A Column by Fr. Tom

## “Lord, Teach Us to Pray”

As I mentioned in a previous column, we are called by Jesus to be His disciples. We also learned that the meaning of the word disciple comes from the Latin root, *discere*, which means “to learn.” Of all the things that Jesus taught His disciples during His earthly ministry, there is only one thing that they asked Him to teach them. “[Jesus] was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, ‘Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.’” [LK 11:1]

During Jesus’ ministry, he taught most lessons by example, and this is true of prayer too, to an extent. First, the disciples would have known from their own tradition that prayer is important. In addition, they could tell from the actions of Jesus that prayer was a constant part of his life. However, He often prayed by Himself: “Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed.” [MK 1:35]

So, Jesus was teaching them *to* pray, but He hadn’t taught them *how to* pray. So they asked Him how to pray. Over the next few weeks, I would like to focus this column on the answer to that question. There are many great ways to pray, and the *best* way depends on each individual person. However, no matter what way or ways you choose to pray, the most important part of prayer is that we do it.

So my first lesson in prayer is be like Jesus, find – no, **make** – the time to pray. If we wait until

we have the time, we never will. I know that sometimes during my life I have tried to “fit prayer in whenever I can,” During those times, I often found myself going to bed without spending any time in prayer, and then my only prayer was, “Good night, Lord, we’ll try again tomorrow.” We have to **make** time. If you are the kind of person who keeps a calendar or planner, schedule an appointment with Jesus. His calendar is wide open for you. Whenever you’re available, He will be available too. If you have a daily routine, perhaps you can find a time that will work for you every day. For example, maybe you can get up a little early and “have a cup of coffee with Jesus.” Or maybe, you can take Jesus on your morning commute. Just turn off the radio, and spend some time in prayer with the Lord. Morning talk shows will make you mad and morning news will make you sad, but morning prayer will make you glad.

Your assignment for this week is to find a good time for you to spend some good time with God. It doesn’t have to be a long time, even 5-10 minutes a day is a good start. Just start – TODAY!!

